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ABSTRACT

The first 2 of the 12 publications reviewed in this annotated bibliography describe what principals actually do as instructional leaders. The first document reports on habits and values evinced by eight schools whose principals were viewed as proficient instructional leaders. Although several distinct leadership styles emerged, the ethic of reciprocity characterized schools with the most successful leadership. The second study observed and interviewed five "effective" principals over an eight-week period. Again, leadership styles varied as principals incorporated instructional objectives into markedly similar daily routines. The third publication stresses the principal as master architect of curricular unity, successfully integrating the written, taught, and tested curricula. The fourth and sixth publications address the multiplicity of principal roles and suggest that principals share their instructional leadership functions with other staff to achieve a more collaborative approach to teaching and learning. The fifth article describes a plan that incorporates classrooms, schools, and entire districts in a leadership strategy. The seventh article recommends that principals partially resume their master teacher roles by becoming andrologogical educators, or teachers of adults. The remaining publications discuss school policies, practices, and norms that challenge students, conceptual frameworks and models for effective instructional leadership, and effective and ineffective principal behaviors. (MLH)

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The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

The selections are intended to give educators easy access to the most significant and useful information available from ERIC. Because of space limitations, the items listed should be viewed as representative, rather than exhaustive, of literature meeting those criteria.

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
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The Effective Instructional Leader

1 **Bird, Tom, and Judith Warren Little.** *Instructional Leadership in Eight Secondary Schools. Final Report.* Boulder, Colorado: Center for Action Research, Inc., June 1985. 281 pages. ED 263 694.

Choosing eight secondary schools whose principals were thought to be proficient instructional leaders, Bird and Little sought to identify the varieties of leadership these principals demonstrated. The schools were chosen for their diversity in size, socioeconomic status, and student body. Researchers spent the first year of the study interviewing, observing, and informally conversing with administrators and teachers in the schools. The second stage of the study involved converting the first year's qualitative observations into measurable norms of behavior.

The researchers assumed that successful schools would display workplace habits and values that made them successful and that leadership was somehow bound up in those habits. They also believed that, though the demands placed on school leaders are great and the element of charisma plays some role in leadership, leaders can be made as well as born. Indeed, the school as a whole can have a collective capacity for improvement.

Analyzing their data, Bird and Little noted several distinct leadership styles or images emerging. Some leaders see their role as letting a strong instructional program manage itself; "let good teachers teach" is their attitude. Other administrators talk less about teachers than about teaching. Some push for particular methods or ideas, holding clear expectations for their schools. Other principals affect the program no less profoundly by "infiltrating" the faculty with ideas on teaching practices or curriculum without generating direct confrontations or counterideas. Finally, some administrators promote teachers as leaders and attempt to increase the school's capacity for improvement from within.

Schools having the most successful leadership were characterized by an ethic of reciprocity—the principal respected the professional expertise of teachers, and the teachers recognized the principal's duty to both observe and evaluate. Whereas teachers in most schools are isolated from one another, those with the most engaging leaders broke through the professional silence to offer advice and support with the principal's encouragement.

2 **Dwyer, David C., and others.** *Five Principals in Action: Perspectives on Instructional Management.* San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1983. 70 pages. ED 231 085.

In another study of what instructional leaders actually do, researchers at the Far West Laboratory studied five principals over an eight-week period, observing each through three full workdays and interviewing them the following days. The researchers then made models of each principal's pattern of instructional management. Then, the models were compared and combined to provide a modified general model of instructional leadership.

Principals were selected from a group identified by superintendents and central-office personnel from San Francisco Bay area districts as effective or successful principals. After interviewing thirty-two possible candidates, researchers selected five who were most articulate about their jobs and seemed most interested in the study. Seven-year achievement profiles of their schools were prepared to confirm the school's academic effectiveness.

Researchers found seven major areas of instructional leadership: three dealing with school contexts (the principal's personal characteristics, the institution's characteristics, and the community contexts); three with outcomes of a principal's leadership (school climate, instructional organization, and student achievement); and one with a principal's management behaviors.

The leadership behaviors of individual principals varied in style but were surprisingly similar in the nature of their activities. All the principals had well-established routines that enmeshed them in the daily instructional concerns of their schools. They seemed to have working theories of instruction by which they interpreted and guided their daily management activities; in other words, they reflected on their experiences in leading instruction and made their conclusions part of their usual approach to instructional leadership. They also considered school climate an important, manipulable factor in improving instruction and learning.

Overall, the core concept that emerges from this study "is one that visualizes instructional leadership accruing from the repetition of routine and mundane acts performed in accord with a principal's overarching perspective on schooling." Instructional leaders are goal-driven but also attentive to the necessary details of daily management.

3 **English, Fenwick W.** "The Principal as Master Architect of Curricular Unity." *NASSP Bulletin* 71, 498 (April 1987): 35-42.

Principals desiring to improve their schools cannot be content merely to coordinate responses and activities of individual teachers. Instead, they must strive to create staff synergy by visualizing and designing workable models of curricular unity.

English sees curricular unity as comprising three interactive

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3 **Fairman, Marvin, and Clark, Elizabeth**. "Moving toward Excellence: A Model to Increase Student Productivity." *NASSP Bulletin*, 69, 477 (January 1985), pp. 6-11. EJ 311 650.

"Teacher expectations of their students reaching high levels of achievement regardless of background" is one of the distinguishing characteristics of effective schools, say the authors, and it is the principal who is largely responsible for creating this climate of high expectations.

The climate of expectations in a school works in a cyclical fashion—the expectations of school community members determine their behavior, and this behavior in turn influences the expectations for success or failure in the next turn of the wheel. Principals in effective schools take advantage of this cycle by recognizing and rewarding excellence appropriately, which nudges the school's overall climate toward one with higher expectations. Principals in ineffective schools, on the other hand, fail to acknowledge teachers' and students' positive behaviors, "therefore negating any cumulative positive effect their behavior could have on increasing the expectations for teachers and students."

"The tone for establishing high expectations starts with principals who must have high expectations for themselves, for faculty members, and for students," say the authors. "They help establish and capitalize on the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy by modeling appropriate behavior." The authors also discuss other key factors of effective schools, including strong administrative leadership, a safe and orderly school climate, emphasis on basic skills, and a system for monitoring and assessing student performance that is tied to the school's instructional objectives.

4 **Firestone, William A., and Wilson, Bruce L**. *Creating Cultures That Support Instruction: A View of the Principal's Leadership Role*. Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools, Inc., January 1984. 9 pages. ED 242 101.

School culture—"the system of publicly and collectively accepted meanings, beliefs, values, and assumptions that a staff uses to guide its actions and interpret its surroundings"—can strongly influence student achievement. In this paper, Firestone and Wilson first discuss three important elements of school culture—content, symbols, and communications patterns—and then suggest concrete methods principals can use to manipulate these elements to raise students' expectations and consequent achievement.

"Content specifies the commitments and task definitions that are desirable" in the school, for example, acceptable standards for student achievement and methods of maintaining order. To use this element of culture profitably, the principal must firmly decide "what his or her own values, task definitions, and commitments are." This sounds simple but is actually difficult in practice because "being in favor of some things often requires not supporting others." Studies indicate that principals tend to overly accommodate to others' needs and desires rather than making strong commitments. "Such accommodations can undermine strong cultures," the authors caution.

"Symbols" of a culture are defined as "the means used to carry its content." Stories—both true events and the myths and legends of a school—are major symbols. Other symbols are physical objects, such as flags, trophies, report cards, and so forth. Rituals, such as assemblies, meetings, and conferences, are yet another form of symbol. Principals are in an ideal position to manipulate the symbol system of a school in a variety of ways. Besides "managing stories," principals can allocate funds, space, and time in ways that "symbolize the importance given to instruction and learning."

"Communications patterns help reinforce the cultural content carried by symbols" and are essential to the proper interpretation of these symbols. "Here it is important to know both the quantity of communication and how it is organized," state the authors. Principals' communications patterns are generally characterized by numerous impromptu conversations with staff and students throughout the day. "The trick to shaping a culture that effectively supports instruction is maintaining consistency across hundreds of separate interactions," so that the gestalt of the principal's underlying values becomes obvious to all members of the school community.

5 **Glasman, Naftaly S**. "Student Achievement and the School Principal." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 6, 3 (Fall 1984), pp. 283-296. EJ 307 809.

How does the school principal influence student achievement? The linkage between school principal behavior and student outcomes has not been studied in great depth, says Glasman. Past studies have focused "either primarily on the school principal or primarily on student achievement," but not on their linkage, except for some studies limited to unusually effective schools. Glasman here reviews these past studies and their limitations, then focuses on the question of how principal behavior might influence student achievement via the symbol system in the school.

The author's conceptual focus "is on principals' active beliefs that, if they use data on gains in their interactions with teachers, they can improve the gains." In other words, if the principal shares test data with teachers that show improving student performance, the teachers are more likely to continue behaviors that improve student test scores. This is a classic method of manipulating the cycle of expectations and behaviors in an organization to promote organizational improvement.

Glasman goes on to suggest that principals' beliefs that they can influence student outcomes may be more important than whether they actually can influence these outcomes. Adopting such a strong "value stance" can directly influence teachers' beliefs that they, too, can influence student outcomes. The beliefs of teachers, says Glasman, are actually more important than those of principals, because teachers work much more closely with students than do principals.

6 **Jackson, Bruce**. "Lowered Expectations: How Schools Reward Incompetence." *Phi Delta Kappan*, 67, 4 (December 1985), pp. 304- 305. EJ number not yet assigned.

In this "point of view" article, Jackson contends that secondary schools breed incompetence and lowered expectations by rewarding students for failure. He goes on to make several suggestions for reforming the current system.

In elementary schools, "the educational system works because students' learning processes are closely supervised," because the approval of teachers and other adults is important to young children, and because additional work is often required for students who are falling behind. As students age, their values and orientations change—peer approval becomes more important than adult approval, and time away from school is more highly valued than time in school. In addition, the ability of schools to closely supervise student progress is compromised by larger teacher-student ratios and different organizational structures.

"For teachers in the middle or junior high school, following up on missing homework assignments becomes a logistical nightmare," says Jackson. Students at this age discover a "vast honeycomb of loopholes"—such as cutting classes and opting for easy courses—that make it easier and more rewarding to be an incompetent than to be a good student. In short, incompetence is rewarded with what students of this age highly value: "time- away-from-task." Not surprisingly, Jackson considers time-on-task to be

Keefe offers principals four domains for conceptualizing instructional leadership: formative preparation (self-education to obtain a firm knowledge base); planning and organizing; implementation (orchestrating school community talents to produce excellent results); and evaluation based on vital signs (achievement test scores, attendance and discipline records, library usage, number of successful graduates, and other factors).

To help principals marshal school community resources and develop an instructional improvement plan, Keefe describes five essential ingredients. Principals are advised to set objectives based on desired outcomes, develop a database of background information, identify staff development needs, implement desired changes, and evaluate program effectiveness. Finally, the improvement plan must be carefully monitored to ensure sufficient collaboration among principals and teachers and "offset the liabilities arising from professional isolation and adversarial relationships."

7 **McPherson, R. Bruce, and John A. Lorenz,** "The Pedagogical and Andragogical Principal—The Consummate Teacher." *NASSP Bulletin* 69, 481 (May 1985): 55-60. EJ 318 242.

According to McPherson and Lorenz, principals have become "management functionaries" instead of instructional leaders because they have abandoned their master teacher role and "invented elaborate rationales" to justify that choice. Schools' growing complexity, coupled with increasing specialization of administrative and teaching roles, have produced full-time principals with little time to visit a classroom, much less manage one.

The rare principal who still teaches students may be highly respected by faculty for encouraging free exchange of pedagogical ideas. But because teaching students may not be feasible for most administrators, the authors suggest that principals become andragogical educators, or teachers of adults.

Principals well versed in adult learning theory (advanced by Malcolm Knowles) can enhance their schools' supervisory, evaluative, and staff development processes. To succeed, "principals need to see teachers as independent learners rather than the semi-independent learners they were when they were children." An andragogical approach starts with adults' needs, not the organization's, and focuses on the individual and the learning process rather than content.

Although some personal risk is involved, the rewards of improved instruction and enhanced leadership capability are well worth the effort.

8 **Murphy, Joseph F., and others.** "Academic Press: Translating High Expectations into School Policies and Classroom Practices." *Educational Leadership* 40, 3 (December 1982), 22-26. EJ 272 636.

"Academic press" is the degree to which the school environment —school policies, practices, expectations, norms, and rewards— pressures students to work hard and do well academically. Various research studies have built evidence that school policies and classroom practices can convey expectations that raise student achievement.

Of two areas of school policy that can communicate expectations to students, one area has to do with school functioning and structure: framing clear and attainable school goals; grouping students to convey academic expectations to them; protecting students' instructional time; and ensuring an orderly, safe environment required for learning.

The second category of policies focuses on student progress, including the amount of homework generally required, grading procedures, monitoring of students' progress, remediating students without abandoning them, reporting their progress, and providing promotion/retention strategies that emphasize eventual mastery of goals.

By setting policies in these areas, a principal can influence the level of academic expectations in school. With this commitment to students, leaders can establish policies for the whole school and for each individual teacher that promote "academic press." Such coordinated policies, say Murphy and his colleagues, have been shown to raise schoolwide norms, as well as improve students' beliefs in their ability to succeed academically and in the value of hard work in school.

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9 **Murphy, Joseph, and others.** "Instructional Leadership: A Conceptual Framework." *Planning and Changing* 14, 3 (Fall 1983): 137-49. EJ 288 154.

Part of the School Effectiveness Program of the Santa Clara County (California) Office of Education, this model divides a principal's instructional leadership into three general areas: functions, activities, and processes. *Functions* include ten kinds of actions that instructional leaders perform, according to the literature. These functions are the "what-to-do" phase of this model: (1) framing school goals and objectives, (2) developing and promoting expectations, (3) developing and promoting standards, (4) assessing and monitoring student performance, (5) protecting instructional time, (6) knowing curriculum and instruction, (7) promoting curricular coordination, (8) promoting and supporting instructional improvement, (9) supervising and evaluating instruction, and (10) creating a productive work environment.

How instructional leaders perform these functions comprises the areas called *activities* and *processes*. Research agrees that principals can function formally through schoolwide policies, generally accepted practices, or more informal personal interactions— methods that Murphy and his colleagues call *activities*. Moreover, instructional leaders use certain *processes* to lead a school's instructional staff, including varieties of conflict resolution, communication, group processes, decision-making, change processes, and interactions with people and institutions external to the school.

10 **Persell, Caroline Hodges, and others.** "Effective Principals: What Do We Know from Various Educational Literatures?" Paper presented at the National Conference on the Principalship, October 20-22, 1982. ED 224 177.

Persell and her colleagues critically analyze school- effectiveness literature to find the underlying assumptions about effective principals, and they then propose another, more justifiable model of instructional leadership. They find that the effective-schools studies (up to 1982) tended to agree on the general characteristics of how effective principals act. The nine points of general agreement that they found read like a litany of administrative virtues: effective principals generate a school consensus on and commitment to academic goals; create climates of high academic expectations and mutual respect; display effective instructional leadership, personality traits, and interpersonal styles; facilitate learning objectives by maintaining order; control the organization to reach

goals; use and promote effective use of time; and monitor and evaluate progress toward the goals.

The model underlying most effective-schools studies, they find, is the systems theory model of input-process-output; a principal's behaviors are put into the school instructional context and those behaviors produce the outcomes (that is, what we can observe in teachers and students). This model carries several fatal assumptions, though, particularly the ideas that research has successfully related principals' behaviors to school achievement and that principals are the only persons in schools who initiate anything. Furthermore, the input-output model suggests that there is one best way to approach leadership (that a predictable input will produce a predictable output) and that pupil achievement is best defined through results on standardized tests.

What is missing in this view, according to the authors, is acknowledgement of a school's external influences (parents, government programs, community relations) and the "mediating processes" within a school (such as the school's culture, students' interests and behaviors, and informal alliances among teachers) that stand between a principal's intentions and the actual results. Thus, they propose a model that incorporates the social contexts outside the school and the principal's personal characteristics — with both factors affecting a principal's behaviors. In turn, these behaviors are mediated by processes at work within the school before any changes in student achievement are evident.

11 **Russell, James S., and others.** *Linking the Behaviors and Activities of Secondary School Principals to School Effectiveness: A Focus on Effective and Ineffective Behaviors.* Eugene, Oregon: Center for Educational Policy and Management, University of Oregon. June 1985. 55 pages. ED 258 322.

The authors identify specific behaviors of principals that are linked to the characteristics of effective schools. They list behaviors that principals could consider effective and also those that they should avoid. Instructional leadership is one of the eight characteristics of effective schools that structure the report and includes five effective and five ineffective behaviors.

The effective behaviors include principals actively initiating and guiding inservice training, helping teachers improve their instruction, providing direct support one-to-one for individual teachers, making sure that teachers are evaluated, and hiring effective teachers.)

Several other characteristics of effective schools overlap with the leader's instructionally related duties: for instance, maintaining an orderly school environment, establishing high expectations and clear academic goals, and collaborating with staff to plan instructional programs.

12 **Weber, James.** *Instructional Leadership: A Composite Working Model.* Elmhurst, Illinois: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory; and Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, 1987. 53 pages.

This review of recent research translates investigations on instructional leadership into a working model for practitioners. It draws on three major approaches in the literature— theoretical, practical, and ethnographic. The six chapters each discuss an aspect of the tasks of instructional leaders.

First, setting academic goals may seem to be a clear-cut operation, but in fact it embraces not only particular achievement objectives, but also goals for the entire instructional program. Consequently, a leader's vision for the school sets a schoolwide standard: a standard for expectations for achievement and a standard for excellence in teaching. Second, the strategies for reaching the goals depend on understanding the optimum organization possible in a particular school. Schools are loosely linked organizations, research has shown, demanding coordination rather than control. Curriculum supervision, then, requires flexibility and a keen eye for opportunities to lead.

Third, the knowledge required in hiring and supervising teachers may earn instructional leaders their wages, even if they had little else to do. The ability to listen to teachers' concerns and to establish a reciprocal supervisory relationship probably accounts for much of a successful supervisor's ability.

Protecting instructional time and programs is the fourth dimension of instructional leadership. Because time on task is so important a factor in learning, successful instructional programs share the quality of making instructional time inviolable: few outside interruptions during class times, a minimum of problems for teachers with budget or materials, and a recognition of the importance of time in studying or in academic activities as opposed to simply being in school.

Fifth, protecting instruction time suggests that school climate—the "feel" of a school environment—has much to do with students' valuing of academic pursuits. Instructional leaders are symbol-makers, to whom the whole school looks for the high expectations that make high achievements possible. Finally, it is up to leaders to monitor and evaluate instructional programs: reviewing objectives, monitoring implementation, and gauging success.

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